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E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/28/2034  
TAGS: [PINR](#) [EFIN](#) [EINV](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [AJ](#)  
SUBJECT: (U) REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON AZERBAIJAN  
PRESIDENT ALIYEV AND OTHER KEY LEADERS (C-RE9-02493)

Classified By: ELISSA G. PITTERLE, DIRECTOR, INR/OPS. REASON: 1.4(C).

1. (S) WASHINGTON ANALYSTS ARE CLOSELY FOLLOWING DEVELOPMENTS RELATED TO THE AZERI GOVERNMENT AND WOULD APPRECIATE ANY INFORMATION POST CAN PROVIDE ON RELATIONSHIPS OF KEY NATIONAL POLITICAL FIGURES WITH PRESIDENT ILHAM ALIYEV, AS TIME AND RESOURCES PERMIT. SPECIFICALLY OF INTEREST ARE ANY INSIGHTS INTO THE INTER-RELATIONSHIPS AND PERSONAL/BUSINESS RIVALRIES OR ALLIANCES OF TOP AZERI OFFICIALS, THE PLANS OF THE ALIYEV ADMINISTRATION FOR AZERBAIJAN AND PLANS FOR THEIR OWN POLITICAL FUTURES, ESPECIALLY IF ENERGY PROFITS BEGIN TO WANE AND/OR PROBLEMS ARISE IN THE REGION WITH RUSSIA, IRAN, OR ARMENIA. ANY INFORMATION PROVIDED, PARTICULARLY AS IT RELATES TO THE QUESTIONS BELOW, WILL BE USED IN ASSESSING THE AZERI GOVERNMENT TO KEEP POLICYMAKERS INFORMED ON ANY KEY DEVELOPMENTS.

1) (S) ARE THERE PLANS FOR ANY MAJOR CABINET CHANGES? ARE ANY CURRENT CABINET MEMBERS IN DANGER OF BEING PURGED AND IF SO, FOR WHAT REASONS? IS ALIYEV DISMISSING OFFICIALS OUTRIGHT OR RE-ASSIGNING THEM TO ANOTHER POSITION, SUCH AS AN AMBASSADORIAL POSTING?

2) (S) WHO ARE THE TOP FIVE INDIVIDUALS ILHAM ALIYEV TRUSTS MOST (TO INCLUDE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, FAMILY MEMBERS, OR FRIENDS)? DOES ALIYEV LISTEN TO THEM AND FOLLOW THEIR ADVICE? WHO DOES HE FREQUENTLY COMMUNICATE WITH OR HAVE CONTACT WITH DURING WORK AND OUTSIDE THE OFFICE?

3) (S) PLEASE PROVIDE ANY AVAILABLE BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ABOUT SENIOR AZERI OFFICIALS, TO INCLUDE VIEWS OF THE US, HOBBIES AND PERSONAL INTERESTS, ENGLISH LANGUAGE ABILITY, AND LEVEL OF INFLUENCE WITH PRESIDENT ALIYEV.

4) (S) PLEASE PROVIDE ANY AVAILABLE BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ABOUT ANY AZERI REGIONAL GOVERNORS, INCLUDING DETAILS ON ANY FAMILY MEMBERS, CLAN AFFILIATION, ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND, AND AFFILIATION TO SENIOR GOVERNMENT PATRONS.

5) (S) WHO, AMONG GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, IS PUSHING THE HARDEST LINE ON NAGORNO-KARABAKH? WHO IS WILLING TO COMPROMISE, AND IN WHAT WAY?

6) (S) HOW DO TOP GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS VIEW THE MINSK GROUP NEGOTIATIONS' EFFECTIVENESS? IF THE GOVERNMENT OF AZERBAIJAN VIEWS IT AS HAVING EXCEEDED ITS UTILITY, WHAT ALTERNATIVES DO GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS CONSIDER FOR RESOLUTION OF THE CONFLICT?

7) (S) WHAT ARE INDIVIDUAL SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS' REACTIONS TO THE TURKEY-ARMENIA RAPPROCHEMENT? TO WHAT EXTENT HAVE OFFICIALS CHANGED THEIR VIEWS OF BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH TURKEY? WHAT POLICY CHANGES IS BAKU CONSIDERING IN RESPONSE TO THE RAPPROCHEMENT?

8) (S) WHAT ARE SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS' VIEWS OF BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH IRAN AND RUSSIA? WHAT POLICY CHANGES IS BAKU CONSIDERING THAT WOULD AFFECT RELATIONS WITH IRAN OR RUSSIA?

9) (S) HOW SERIOUSLY ARE SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS CONSIDERING ALTERNATIVES TO THE NABUCCO PIPELINE? HOW LONG IS BAKU WILLING TO NEGOTIATE BEFORE MAKING ENERGY-RELATED POLICY DECISIONS?

10) (S) WHAT ARE THE PRESIDENT'S AND HIS TOP OFFICIALS' VIEWS ON THE EXTENT OF THE TERRORIST THREAT WITHIN AZERBAIJAN? IS TERRORISM AN ISSUE THESE OFFICIALS ARE TRULY CONCERNED WITH, OR ARE THEY USING CRACKDOWNS ON MOSQUES AND OTHER SUCH EFFORTS AS A DISTRACTION FROM THEIR DEMOCRATIC RECORD AND/OR TO CURRY FAVOR WITH THE WEST?

11) (S) WHAT SERIOUS RIVALRIES EXIST BETWEEN MINISTERS AND TOP GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS? ARE THEY BASED ON POLITICAL OR BUSINESS CONFLICTS?

12) (S) ARE THERE ANY MINISTERS OR KEY, RISING DEPUTY MINISTERS REGULARLY PRACTICING DEVOTEES OF ISLAM? PLEASE PROVIDE ANY INSIGHT ON WHETHER RELIGIOUS PRACTICE AFFECTS THE OUTLOOK OF ANY HIGH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, OR THEIR IDEAS ABOUT THE DIRECTION OF THE COUNTRY.

13) (S) WHAT ARE PRESIDENT ALIYEV AND HIS INNER CIRCLE'S VIEWS OF THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE US AND EUROPE?

12. (U) PLEASE CITE C-RE9-02493 IN THE SUBJECT LINE OF REPORTING IN RESPONSE TO THE ABOVE QUESTIONS.  
CLINTON